DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 210 033 IR 009 843

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TITLE Structural Change Criteria in the Selection of Strategies of Communication for Development. An Examination of Two Contrasting Media Systems--National Television and Local Public-Service Radio Stations--in the Light of Structural Change Criteria.
PUB DATE May 80
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annenberg School of Communications Conference on Communications for the 1980's (May 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communications; Cultural Context; *Developing Nations; Information Dissemination; Media Selection; Models; *Policy Formation; Public Television; *Radio; *Social Structure; Technological Advancement; *Television
IDENTIFIERS Communications Research; Public Service

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the important link between social stucture and communications systems and explores some of the practical policy implications resulting from this relationship. First, the concept of social structure as the basis of a pattern of communication is clarified. Then, one paradigm of communication structure typical of many Third World countries is analyzed and the criteria for communications policy implied in this structural process is summarized. Finally, an examination of the evidence of the importance of the "intermediate media" such as local public-service radio provides an example of the application of structural criteria in selecting alternative communications strategies. Thirty-six references are listed. (Author/LLS)

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Structural Change Criteria
In the Selection of Strategies of Communication for Development

An Examination of Two Contrasting media Systems
National Television and Local, Public-Service Radio Stations
In the Light of Structural Change Criteria

Paper presented May, 1980
Annenberg School of Communications
Conference on "Communications
for the 1980's"

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In San Jose, Costa Rica in 1976 the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean stressed the important link between social structure and the development of communication systems. A fundamental aspect of policy is "the indissoluble relation between the phenomenon of communication and the social context in which that phenomenon takes place, and the nexus of mutual conditioning which that relation presupposes" (UNESCO: 1976, 18). This same concern has been an underlying theme of most recent discussion of communication policy and represents a major new trend in our understanding of communication and development.

This paper proposes to articulate further the relation of communication systems and structural change and to explore some of the practical policy implications of this. Part One will attempt to clarify the concept of social structure as the basis of a pattern of communication. Part Two will analyse one paradigm of communication structure typical of many Third World countries and summarise the criteria for communications policy implied in this structural process. Part Three will give an example of the application of structural criteria in selecting alternative communications strategies. Specifically, we will examine evidence of the importance of the "intermediate media" such as local, public-service radio.

Part One: The Structural Analysis of Communications in Development

Nordenstreng and Schiller have recently pointed out "three generations" of communications research, each generation moving more explicitly toward emphasis on the structural changes implicit in national liberation movements as the dominant paradigm in development communications (1979, 3-8).

In the 1950's and early 1960's there was a tendency to see development

as the transfer of technology from the developed nations to the modernised sector of the underdeveloped nations and from there to the disadvantaged hinterlands. The role of communications was to provide channels through which the techniques, life styles, motivations and attitudes of the modernised sector could be diffused into the disadvantaged sector. It was believed that once there were facilities for transferring information, especially through the mass media, the social inequalities would gradually disappear (Lerner: 1958; Schramm: 1964; Rogers: 1969, 1971).

It was not clearly perceived (or at least not stressed) that a pattern of communication is not constituted by introducing media, but rather by the structure of social exchange. Those who hold commodities culturally defined as valuable are sought out for exchange and become the centres within communication networks (Blau: 1964). Channels of communication tend to follow the lines of social power that evolve from these lines of exchange between individuals and groups. Peasants who have nothing to offer--not even the power of organised numbers--do not get <u>significant</u> information even when the mass media are beamed at them.

Secondly, there was an implicit assumption that information is relatively culture and value free, that information could be transferred from one nation to another or within a nation without affecting the symbolic meaning of information. It was not stressed that communication is a structure of meanings and fundamental integrating symbols which establish a common "language" among all within a given communication network. For example, agricultural technology can be interpreted as the prestige symbol of the rural elites or it can be a symbol of unity and defiance against elites among peasants forming a federation of production cooperatives. Whatever symbolic meaning is given, it serves as the signal to ministers of agriculture, extensionists, farmers and all others involved regarding

the goals to be sought. These basic symbols affect the value of resources to be exchanged, the power relations and the channels of communication.

Thirdly, it was assumed that development is essentially a matter of increasing productivity and that there existed a relatively competitive market structure. The process of nation building was not perceived as precisely the struggle to break down internal rigidities stemming from institutionalised concentrations of social power and attempts to eliminate the remnants of external colonial dependence. There was little analysis of the forces for structural change or detection of the emergent social groups who were movers of change and creators of alternative, dissident communications systems. Consequently, the formal design of communications, the selection of media, and other basic policy considerations did not facilitate the new structure of communication channels and new symbol systems that were taking shape.

By the early 1970's there was widespread questioning of the development model based on channels of communication from the industrialised North Atlantic nations, through the modernised elite sector of the dependent nation to the more traditional sectors of the country. Instead of encouraging solidary national political growth, creative economic adaptation and stronger cultural identity, there was an increase of stultifying dependence in all institutional areas. And, by ignoring structural factors, the information, technology and other resources were being diffused through existing communication channels to traditional elites, thus creating greater concentrations of power and reinforcing barriers to communication.

This evidence prompted a second-generation paradigm of communication and development advising that the centralised, top-down communication system should incorporate the communication networks and decision-making of local

communities and popular organisations (Rogers: 1976). But this did not remove the basic contradiction of the old paradigm: expecting a modernising elite, directly linked with and dependent on the North Atlantic nations, to be the movers of political, economic and cultural independence. In national contexts where there had not already been a redistribution of social power, this model simply offers a more efficient means of co-opting popular organisations into the modernisation process.

Nordenstreng and Schiller indicate increasing acceptance of a third generation paradigm of communication and development research which clearly sees communication systems as an aspect of social structure. "Characteristic of the new perspective is an emphasis on global structure, whereby it is precisely the international sociopolitical-economic system that decisively determines the course of development within the sphere of each nation" (1979, 6). Basic to the new paradigm is a reorganisation of international communication systems which permits more national autonomy and horizontal exchange between nations which share common goals of political, economic and cultural independence. This reorganisation would encourage alternative international channels and limit the exclusive dominance of the North Atlantic-modernising elite link. It would permit the growth of what are now dissident, minority communication networks within nations and the development of unifying cultural symbols distinct from those imported from the North Atlantic nations. Karl Sauvant, in his contribution to Nordenstreng and Schiller's book, concludes that "The impetus has to come . . . not from the leading social groups, the middle class and the professional elites . . . but from those parts of host societies that are relatively independent--especially the intelligentsia and popular movements not wedded to established structures"(1979, 19).

This review of research perspectives suggests that the analysis of

communications in national development should take into account three dimensions: 1) the underlying structure of social exchange and social power which constitutes the network of information channels and allocates significant information to different groups in a national system; 2) the systems of integrating symbols which provide cultural criteria regarding what is significant information and who should receive information; and 3) the pressure for change in the system stemming from groups which experience a discrepancy between the information they want and what they actually have access to (Young: 1966: 1973). Here an important aspect is the emergence of counter communication networks and symbol systems based on a pattern of exchange and new integrating symbols created by dissident groups.

Part Two: The Emerging Structure of Communications in the Third World

In order to derive criteria for decisions in communications policy, it is helpful to examine closely the pattern of communications in the light of the three structural dimensions discussed above. This will suggest not only possible inequities flowing from the present structure of communications but the redistribution of social power and the reorganisation of communication patterns that social tensions are generating. The socio-cultural background obviously varies greatly in different developing regions, but the interaction of many Third World countries with the colonial empires of the North Atlantic nations over several centuries has produced a number of common tendencies.

When the trading companies and colonial bureaucracies of the European nations extended themselves around the globe, they frequently established their empires on the basis of existing advanced agrarian societies with a dichotomous, relatively simple two-celled structure. There were many variations and exceptions, but essentially it consisted of a sector of full-time rulers with their retinue of counselors, priests and warriors who constituted

the decision-making group and the sector of semi-subsistence cultivators and artisans who provided in addition to their own needs a surplus for the maintenance of the ruling sector (Wolf, 1966; Lenski, 1966). The two halves of the society were linked by a hierarchy of intermediaries who performed lower-level governing functions, maintained order and extracted the goods--and information--necessary for sustaining the decision-making, public-order activities. It was a centre-periphery pattern of communication: the lower-status individuals or groups each related separately to a local patron and this information was passed up the hierarchy to the centre, and solutions to lower-status problems were passed back down the hierarchy. There was little horizontal communication between villages or at least between intervillage networks.

This hierarchical-dichotomous structure was explained and justified by the symbol system generated in the great or "literate" tradition of the ruling sector with its wise men, priests and poets. Those in the ruling sector were defined as inherently capable of decision making and sustaining the existing order and those in the peasant sector, with only their little or "oral" tradition were defined as inherently incapable of ruling or of understanding the mysteries of the literate tradition.

There was continual resistance in the lower-levels of the hierarchy to the extractive demands of the rulers, but the system was relatively stable because of the military power of the centre, the imposed beliefs, but also because of the paternalistic concern of the rural elites for the needs of the peasant sector. The power of the centre was increased in so far as there were efficient hierarchical channels of information to the centre and because the centre had a far more differentiated pattern of meanings, capable of absorbing more information. The meaning structure of lower levels was less differentiated so that information was "strained out" as it passed

to the peasant sector. Obviously there was no interest that the peasant-artisan groups have access to significant information so that they could participate in the decision making beyond their own villages.

The North Atlantic empires established their control over these regions by either installing their colonial representatives in the place of the ruling elites or by incorporating these elites as the intermediaries between the metropolis and the producing peasant-artisan sector. The effect was to move the centre of information channels back to the overseas metropolis and to make the resident elites the extractors of goods and information responsible to the needs of the empire but not necessarily to the needs of the native geographical region. The internal extractive demands were increased and the hierarchical communication system was strengthened so that the communication channels were usually even more centralised.

The implantation of the symbol system of the literate cultural tradition of Western Europe accentuated the belief in the superiority of the ruling sector, and this was reinforced by a new or invented racial distinction between the rulers and the native peasant sector.

If the tension between the ruling and peasant sector was increased by the greater demands coming from the empire and the denigration of native cultural traditions, the ruling elites could now count on the superior military and technical support from the metropolis. Nevertheless, the harshness was mitigated by humanitarian concerns such as expressed in the Spanish Law of the Indies or by the sheer isolation of peasant villages.

However, with the advance of the industrial revolution and the impersonal efficiency of the capitalistic economic system in Western Europe in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, a new phase of empire began. With steam-powered shipping, the introduction of railroads and more rapid communications such as telegraph and then radio, the

great world-wide urban markets were created and the extractive demands rapidly increased. National banking and credit systems were introduced making productive capital easily available. As former colonial areas gained political independence, ministries of agriculture, industry and education extended technological advisory systems into rural areas. However, this productive capital, technology and education almost always was introduced into the region through the traditional ruling elite sector --which now became an urban-technical sector--and was channeled through the existing hierarchical system to provincial and rural elites. Given the essentially extractive relationship of the hierarchical intermediaries the new resources were not channeled to the peasant-worker sector, but instead increased the extractive power of the rural elites.

This period also ushered in greatly improved living standards and the educational, health, and communication facilities associated with the liberal democratic ideal. However, this was grafted on to the ideology of the traditional ruling elites and became the right of the ruling sector now transformed into an urban-technical elite. Urban centres as modern as London, Paris or New York coexisted with a peasant sector that changed little in hundreds of years. And there was no <u>real</u> attempt to help the peasant sector share in the great literate tradition of the urban, ruling sector.

This new phase of empire accentuated the tensions that finally the system was not able to contain. Whereas before the extraction process was often slow and inefficient, increased demands were now rapid and sharp and lower-status groups were now treated as simply economic, market factors. In many cases with the new markets, land became more valuable and the rural elites moved to expel peasants from land that they had held from time immemorial. Whereas before peasants could often get redress for wrongs

through the paternalistic hierarchy, the capitalistic ideology justified their being treated as simply economic objects. This sharp new deprivation set off great peasant rebellions in many parts of the Third World: in Mexico, the Zapata movement; in China, the movements eventually led by Mao; etc. (Wolf: 1969; Huizer: 1972; Migdal: 1974; White: 1971). The peasant groups, finding no redress in the traditional hierarchy, cut themselves off from the dependency structure and began to establish their own independent decision making and leadership. The peasant movements built solidary lower-status linkages within communities and with other peasant groups in other communities and regions. They developed common unifying symbols which provided a new language very distinct from the dependency culture maintained by the traditional elites. Peasants affected by these movements now saw themselves as the bearers of the more authentic cultural tradition of the region or nation. They also saw themselves as the majority and the rightful holders of the land, educational facilities, markets and all that the urban-technical elites controlled.

The same factors of modernisation influencing the rise of peasant movements were also causing profound divisions in the urban-technical sector. As the validating symbols of the traditional ruling elites were increasingly dominated by the technical-scientific and capitalistic economic-financial orientations, technical and financial information became the most valuable information and the organisations supplying this information became the centres of communication networks. The humanistic, socially idealistic and, with the secularisation accompanying modernisation, religious symbols were now less important and these social institutions marginal. The intelligentsia and other alienated groups tended to break away from the dominant financial-technical sector and build alliances with other aggrieved groups, notably peasant and worker movements (Migdal: 1974; White: 1977).

Popular movements found in these urban-technical allies the organisational, literate and other skills necessary to transform local uprisings into a national coordinated movement. The alliance created a new, more symmetrical power relationship between alienated groups with an elite background and lower-status groups because urban radicals needed the solidary numbers of the peasants and workers to confront traditional elites. This exchange relationship generated new networks of communication channels separate from the hierarchical channels of the modernising ruling elites. Lower-status groups gained access to significant information, both in the national urban sector and internationally, outside of linkages with the financial-technical centres of the North-Atlantic nations.

This alliance, including peasants, urban workers, intellectuals, religious leaders and technocrats frustrated with government corruption and inefficiency, has formulated an alternative symbol system and new socio-political and cultural goals for the nation. Central to the new symbols is the validation of the indigenous culture and the appreciation of lower-status, less Europeanised groups as sources of national culture.

The last fifteen years have seen the structure of international dependency relations entering a new phase. Just as the impact of empire was changed in the Nineteenth Century by improved transportation and communication technology, so now the institutions of mass electronic communications are influencing significantly the structure of power relations. The principal interrelated elements of the new communications institutions are the more direct and global communcations technology, especially the use of satellites; linking computers with communication systems; the development of the transnational economic organisation; and the centering of symbol creation in the advertising industry with its perfection of cultural persuasion and centering cultural symbols on capitalistic consumer values.

These social and technological changes have centralised communication channels and symbol creation in the North-Atlantic nations to the point that the urban-technical sector of the developing nations is now almost totally absorbed or superseded. The cultural symbols of the metropolis are now transmitted directly to the public in the dependent nations without even the former translation through the local ruling elites.

The alliance of popular movements and alienated urban-based groups in the dependent nations are still protagonists in the effort toward alternative patterns of communication, but the struggle has been transferred to the international arena. Groups of nations linked in international movements such as that of the Non-aligned Nations are becoming the organisational structure of political, economic and cultural emancipation. This is forging new horizontal communication networks and is providing the basis for new unifying symbols.

This example of structural analysis of communications in Third World countries suggests the principal policy criteria to be employed if the formal planning of communications systems is to congruent with the emerging sociocultural patterns of those nations.

1. Given the obstacles to development posed by the vertical, hierarchical structure of communication channels stretching from control centres in the North Atlantic nations to remote peasant villages, new horizontal channels should be encouraged at all levels. At the international level these horizontal networks would provide direct access between developing countries who share similar problems and similar social, economic and political goals; at the national level, interchange between various popular movements; and at the local, regional level, coordination of the popular movements in that area.
2. The media should provide access to the organisation of urban-technical

and popular alliances so that the media can be extensions of the communication structure which is constituted by movements seeking national independence. Since the control of the media by private enterprise in these countries generally implies the dominance of the media by transnational advertising interests and the local elites dependent on North-Atlantic centres--both hostile to independent popular movements --this goal generally calls for some form of autonomous or government control of the media in order to insure wider, more impartial access.

3. The content of the media should not reflect the cultural symbols of the developed nations but those new symbol systems which are being shaped by the alliances of popular movements and cultural leaders seeking sociocultural emancipation.
4. In order to counter the deeply entrenched hierarchical dependency pattern of communications, special efforts should be made to develop structures of participatory communication which insure that lower-status groups have access to the information which is significant for their understanding of local and national decision making and that they can make their contribution to this process.

Part Three: Applying Structural Criteria in Policy Decisions in the Development of Communication Systems

To illustrate the significance of planning media systems in terms of their congruence with and support of new communication patterns, it is helpful to examine two contrasting examples: introducing television in developing countries and local, community-directed radio.

Television at the National Level

In most developed nations television has become a medium for advertising, brief news reports, an instrument of political campaigning, and popular light entertainment with much less emphasis on cultural and

and political literacy. Most developing countries have introduced some form of television, generally following the models of Britain, France or the United States. The studies of broadcasting in the Third World by Katz (1977) and others provides some basis for briefly reviewing the experience with television in the light of structural criteria.

1. Encouraging the development of horizontal communication networks.

Given the level of technology and skills that television management, production and transmission requires, television systems generally have been installed directly from the United States, Britain or France and the training of personnel is done in these countries. These trainees adopt the models available to them in the orientation courses, and this has led to continued dependency not only at the level of equipment but in the styles of programming and production. Such a dependency discourages experimentation with new formats of management, production and content themes which support more horizontal exchange patterns between Third World countries and between popular movements within these countries.

2. Public-service orientation with autonomous or government direction.

Many developing countries have attempted to give television a public orientation by making it partially or entirely a government function. However, television production and transmission is expensive, government budgets are limited and it is difficult to collect users fees. There is also great pressure from international and national advertising and private enterprise interests. The tendency in many countries is toward support by advertising, and this orients television toward audiences with purchasing power and toward bland, irrelevant content.

Moreover, given the limited number of channels and hours of television, few countries have found the flexible format which combines the intense debate of public issues characteristic of a country in the process of

social change, the development of cultural and political literacy and the need for national integration.

3. Projecting a new national cultural synthesis

Once television is installed, there is pressure to extend the programming around the clock. Since rarely have ways been discovered to provide attractive, worthwhile programmes with local talent and low budgets, the hours are filled out with inexpensive programmes imported from the United States or other countries, and tastes in television viewing are rapidly oriented toward these countries.

Moreover, to meet the demand for technical skills, there is a tendency to recruit personnel with an urban, Western background who are less familiar with their own indigenous--often rural-based--national culture.

4. Participatory Communications

In most developing countries rural areas do not have electricity, and even in urban areas the cost of a television receiver is too great for the majority. Television develops into an elite medium directed toward the urban middle class, and mass communication systems are oriented to the interests and tastes of that relatively elite group.

Given the centralised, urban location of television studios and the limited number of hours and channels, television lends itself to enhancing the images of a few dominant entertainment personalities or central political figures. This encourages the feeling that one must be a demigod to use the media and reinforces the existing hierarchical pattern of communications.

This is not to argue that the institutional setting of television cannot be planned so as to support structural changes occurring in Third World countries. However, the technical limitations of television and the institutional models introduced have tended to reinforce the external dependency and internal rigidities that are the basis of the problem.

The "Intermediate Media": Local, Public-Service Radio

The first-generation discussions of communication and development put great stress on large national radio and television systems as a key to integrating a new nation and mobilising it for development. Schramm (1977) added to the analysis of this "big media" an emphasis on the importance of the "little media", small and inexpensive media usually employed in face-to-face group settings. However, there has been little mention of the development role of what might be termed "intermediate media", one example of which is local, public-service radio.

There is now increasing discussion of community-level, public-service radio and community-controlled programming in radio and television in Canada (McNulty, 1979), the United States (Thomas, 1979) and Britain (Lewis, 1977, 1978). In the African and Asian countries which followed the very centralised British and French models of national communications of thirty to fifty years ago, local radio is generally not found. The major development of local, public-service radio in Third World countries is occurring in Latin America.

One of the early forms of this was Radio Sutatenza, established in 1949 to broadcast programs of basic education and to promote campaigns for the improvement of health, agriculture and community development. As Radio Sutatenza evolved into Acción Cultural Popular (ACPO), it began to train local community leaders to support the educational programmes and campaigns in community and regional organisations. Thus, the radio was inserted into a structure of rural organisation at the municipal and regional level and served as one part of the communications network linking these organisations. ACPO has grown into a national rural education institution with relatively centralised broadcasting so that it may no longer be characterised as local radio (Musto, 1971).

However, the relative success of ACPO influenced the establishing of some 75-100 other similar educational-cultural radio stations in virtually all countries of Latin America (Braun, 1977).[1] These generally have remained small local stations, and they provide a variety of models of intermediate media oriented toward development and social change. To analyse the significance of these models of local, public-service radio we will return to the four structural criteria for communications policy.

1. Encouraging the development of horizontal communication networks

Most of the radio stations in question are small one to five kilowatt units covering the service area of a market town (a radius of 30 to 50 kilometres) constituting a regional intervillage system. The market towns where the stations are usually located are the centres of regional road systems, bus lines, commercial trading, provincial government with health, education and agricultural services, and religious-cultural organisations: this forms an already established self-contained communication network. This official communications system generally tends to follow the hierarchical lines of the traditional social structure: from regional offices to local rural elites (larger landholders, merchants, political leaders, etc.).

The cultural-educational radio stations enter this communications pattern at a different level because it frequently starts as a literacy campaign aimed at lower-status, semi-subsistence peasants. Most of the stations have been initiated by or have the cooperation of socially-oriented Catholic priests or lay leaders, and the radio school programmes have been promoted through an existing structure of neighborhood religious leaders. The combination of religious social idealism, the emphasis on community development in Latin America in the 1960's and 1970's, and especially the rapidly worsening socio-economic situation of semi-subsistence cultivators, in comparison with rural elites, has provided a strong motivational impetus.

On the basis of this motivation and the structure of religious leadership, which in the cultural context of Latin America exists in virtually every rural neighborhood, radio schools usally were rapidly extended into neighborhoods of every part of the region. The radio school programmes gradually evolved into a lower-status communication network based on a series of neighborhood organisations, direct broadcasts to the participants in these organisations, paraprofessional peasant promoters of neighborhood organisations visiting isolated communities, monthly meetings of neighborhood leaders, and a regional training centre in the market town for short courses in community organisation, cooperatives, health and agriculture. In time this network often formed the basis for federations of credit, consumer or marketing cooperatives, small farmer special-interest organisations, and rural women's organisations. The radio schools and training courses often have used some form of the Freire "concientisation method", and this, combined with the sheer momentum of organisation, generated a type of regional, lower-status movement for land reform, better public services, and a greater voice for peasants in regional political decisions (White: 1976-A; 1976-B).

The radio station serves as a central communication exchange within the regional system of peasant organisations with a time period alloted to each type of organisation or audience. "Prime time" programming is usually a broad cultural and community-service program which discusses current peasant problems in the area. Frequently local leaders prepare their own programs with some help from the station's technical staff or peasant leaders are interviewed directly or in their communities. In this case the radio is a medium for peasant leaders to be in contact with their organisations in remote communities and for leaders in one community speaking to those in another community.

News programs specialise in local events, often stressing local advocacy or peasant pressure-group action which would not ordinarily be reported or at least with not the same concientising emphasis. Since lower-status groups in rural areas of Latin America do not have telephones, newspapers or door-to-door postal service, local radio supplies this function

2. Public-service orientation with autonomous or government direction

The majority of local stations following this model have been started by the Church or people associated with the Church, but many have gradually passed the direction to a board of directors with management capacity and with representation of the constitutency served. In Guatemala and in Bolivia some of the stations are under the direction of native Indian groups and are broadcasting in the Indian languages. Some governments, such as Peru, have moved to set up regional radio stations for educational-promotional purposes; this offers a variant of the general model. A major problem is maintaining good local managers with a public-service orientation at low wages.

Much of the initial installation costs have come from international aid organisations. Operating expenses are covered by some selective advertising, although this can be uncertain because of the inevitable hostility of local merchants; popular contributions; continued assistance from international or local Church organisations; and, for some educational programs, from the national government. These small stations can operate on relatively small budgets because salaries and other expenses in provincial towns are low, and much of the programming--even management--is based on volunteers or part-time help. Low budgets leave these stations no alternative but participation from the community.

In spite of low budgets and competition from local commercial stations, many public-service stations gain large, loyal audiences precisely because

they are directed to the large lower-status rural or urban population. In cases where stations have good management such as Radio Santa Maria in the Dominican Republic they have attained an unusually high level of technical skill in producing cultural and educational programming.

Groups of stations in Guatemala and Bolivia have formed national federations and these federations or individual stations are organised as the Latin American Association of Radiophonic Education (ALER).

3. Projecting a new national cultural synthesis

Most stations see themselves as the centre of a lower-status cultural movement as is attested by the term "cultural" in the title or the frequent subtitle with some variant of "The Voice of the People." Much of the loyalty of audiences is due to the willingness to speak openly of lower-status problems and give a more objective perspective than other media usually give. The experience of constant harrassment from local elites, threat of bombings or actual bombings, the occasional closing by authorities, and other forms of opposition indicates the cost of lower-status identity.

Many of the stations have taken a resolute stand in favour of a national or regional culture: refusing to play English-language music from the United States and emphasing instead the local folk music or the popular protest music. Most stations sponsor some form of annual folk festival. The fact that they operate at the local level means that they use the local idiom and emphasise indgenous cultural values.

4. Participatory Communications

In his review for UNESCO of development projects in Latin America with a dimension of participatory communications, O'Sullivan finds that most projects were first initiated and supported by international agencies and that these projects ceased when the outside initiative was withdrawn (1979).

This is not surprising. The analysis of the process of structural change outlined above indicates that truly independent lower-status organisations are generally not started by outside agencies but by lower-status groups spontaneously in a moment of intense conflict with the hierarchical dependency structure. The evidence suggests that the media such as a lower-status oriented local station does not initiate unilaterally popular participation. Instead lower-status groups usually formulate their message independently and begin to build their own horizontal communication networks. Local radio only gives them easy access to a communication instrument that will enable them to build support within the local area.

Local stations with alert management and good contacts with popular organisations know how to spot manifestations of peasant or worker action with social-change significance, seek out the people involved, encourage them to speak out and, most important, train representatives to use the radio medium effectively. Most local stations can become participants in a local pattern of events much more easily than national media, and many activities which are important to popular organisations would never gain access to national media because they are regional or because there simply is not time for all regional events. Obviously, it much easier for peasants or workers to gain access to a station near them than to have to make contact with the national media. Local educational-cultural stations also provide the long-term educational and conscientisation service that are essential in building popular organisations. Health and agricultural problems, for example, tend to be relatively regionalised, and it is much easier to address these problems at the local level than in programmes prepared by technicians at the national level.

It should be stressed that local, public service radio is just one element in a general design of communication policy for development purposes.

Local radio must be complemented by the rural newspaper, publication of low-cost books for rural families, different forms of folk media, the national media, and even appropriate forms of community or family television. The important point, however, is the analysis of how local radio--or any other medium--relates to the emerging social structure of communications in a developing country. The model described here--based on the writer's research and information on some 40 radio stations--reflects very much the social and political context of Latin America. A careful examination of the structural conditions in other parts of the world would suggest how local radio could be adapted to those varied social contexts.

Conclusions

This review of the structural criteria which are important for policy considerations in communications and development suggests three structural dimensions as central:

1. The underlying structure of social exchange and social power which constitutes the network of information channels and allocates signficant information to different groups in a national system;
2. The systems of integrating symbols which provide cultural criteria regarding what is significant information and who should receive information;
3. The pressure for change in the system stemming from groups which experience a discrepancy between the information they want and what they actually have access to.

By analysing in historical perspective the social process typical of many Third World areas in terms of these structural dimensions of communication, it has been possible to derive more specific policy criteria for communications and development: 1) Encouraging the development of horizontal

communication networks; 2) achieving a public-service orientation with autonomous or government direction; 3) projecting a new national cultural synthesis; and 4) developing participatory communication institutions.

The examination of two examples of the use of media in developing countries, national television and local educational-cultural radio, in the light of structural criteria indicates the importance of relating the design of communications systems to the social context.

First, it helps to avoid introducing media institutions in a way that will reinforce internal social rigidities and external dependency relations.

Second, it can help to identify the horizontal communication patterns that are emerging and that are the "natural" process of continual redistribution of social power continually taking place in all social systems. The media institutions can then build on these new communication structures and contribute to equity and stability in the socio-political system.

Third, it may provide greater sensitivity to the human values which are being defined in new cultural syntheses and indicate how the media institutions can be open to this cultural creativity.

Finally, by being aware of new social movements, it is possible to provide to the groups involved access to communication systems so that there is a wider debate of important issues and a consideration of the demands of these movements in social and political decision making.

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[1] The figure of 75-100 educational-cultural radio stations of the type discussed here is intended to be a safe estimate. Dr. Franz-Josef Eilers, Director of the Catholic Media Council in Aachen, Germany, estimated that there were more than 200 such stations in Latin America including Brazil after having made a rough survey. ALER has about 35-40 members at present, but many local stations are not members of ALER, especially the smaller, less developed stations without radio schools.

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